



Ad Val Advisor

*The Newsletter
for Wyoming
Property Tax
Appraisers*

Inside:

◆ Note from the Administrator

◆ New CAMA Deployed

◆ First In-Production Training

Property Tax Division Newsletter**Editor: Geir Solvang****Herschler Building****122 W. 25th Street****Cheyenne, WY 82002-0110****Director****Edmund J. Schmidt****Staff****Wade Hall, Administrator****David Chapman, CAMA/GIS Manager****Ken Uhrich, Appraisal Services Manager****Phone (307) 777-5200****FAX (307) 777-7527****Internet Address:****<http://revenue.state.wy.us>**

From the Administrator

In last month's Ad Val Advisor, I hinted that there would be significant news coming from the Ad Valorem Tax Division. Well, as you can see from what follows, there is. If there is a common thread here, it is that the Division is looking towards the future. We are changing, not for the sake of change, but to improve our ability to achieve our mission in the days, months, and years to come. Of course, change and forward motion entail some risk and challenges. But, as someone once said, you have no chance to move ahead if you're standing still. So, we're not going to stand still.

There will be more in upcoming issues about some of our changes and accomplishments, but I'll summarize a few here:

First, after all the years of discussions, RFP's, contracting, and background work, the first two deployments of the Colorado CustomWare CAMA software have occurred. That is a major milestone accomplished through a team effort of DOR, the Standards Committees, Colorado CustomWare, and—of great importance—the two pilot counties' Assessors and staffs. A new CAMA system deployment is no longer just a hypothetical discussion. It's running in the counties—it's *real*.

Second, I have instituted a significant reorganization here at the Ad Valorem Division. The result will be a much more "task-oriented" organization. The old GIS, Locally Assessed, and State Assessed sections will be gone.

What will emerge when the reorganization is complete and "official" on July 1st will be an Appraisal Services Group, managed by Ken Uhrich, and a CAMA/GIS Services Group, managed by David Chapman. We are already working on the transition to this new organizational structure. Some job functions will change, and personnel "shuffling" will occur as part of the reorganization. I ask you to bear with us as we complete the transition. I can not overemphasize that there will be a great deal of shared responsibilities and "cross-fertilization" between the two groups. All members of both groups are still an integral part of an overall Ad Valorem team. In the coming weeks, we will be

communicating to all of you what the reorganization will mean as far as whose responsibilities will be whose, and the contact persons for various needs.

Finally, about that name. A constant source of questions (and some complaints) from the public has centered on our Division's name, the "Ad Valorem Tax Division." Most members of the general public, and even some in the "tax" arena, have no idea what "Ad Valorem" means. So, we're changing our name! Over the next few months, we will be formalizing our name change, but we are now going to be known as the "Property Tax Division." I hope this name is more descriptive and better understood. You can expect the change to start being reflected in our correspondence and the like relatively soon. As the saying goes, "same folks, different name."

We'll have some more to report in coming months. As I said last month, "Stay tuned."

Wade W. Hall
Administrator
Property Tax Division

DEPLOYED!

The Wyoming CAMA Project passed a major milestone this month with the conversion and deployment of Sweetwater and Uinta counties to the RealWare CAMA software. This achievement was the culmination of nearly nine months of effort from Division personnel, Colorado CustomWare (CCI), and by several Standards Committees.

The biggest achievement thus far has been everyone's ability to work together towards a common goal. There has been a lot of conversation, a tremendous amount of negotiation, and a healthy amount of compromise on everyone's part. At a very basic level, it is a huge challenge to agree upon a uniform set of work practices while still allowing enough flexibility to get the job done.

But this milestone is just a marker along a road that stretches much farther into the future. As an analogy that is frequently bantered around here in the halls of the Property Tax Division, the project is like childbirth. We have spent the past nine months dealing with all of the hopes and aspirations for the future. During this time, we have gone from being comfortable in our own worlds to experiencing change and all the pains that go along with it.

Finally, after nine months of growing discomfort, we endure the blessed event. I must admit, however, as a father of three children that this delivery was, by comparison, a lot less painful. In this particular delivery no one shouted at me saying "you did this to me," or left deep penetrating fingernail marks on my arm! Believe me, the lack of bodily damage, colorful metaphors and the general mess associated with babies is a good thing.

However, this project, like being a parent, is far from over. As stressful as planning, organizing and the deploying are, it is in reality just the beginning. Bringing our assessment practices, data management and general work habits through the next formative years will be challenging. As any parent will tell you in child rearing, in some ways the only easy day was yesterday. Any process that takes a project from the toddler stage, through the teenage years, into young adulthood and beyond is challenging to say the least.

Trust me when I say that it is not all torture and heartache. Much of our time has been pretty enjoyable and I believe we all have learned a great deal throughout the process. This is due, in large part, to the great bunch of people who have been pouring their best into the project.

We hope some of what we have learned will help the counties that are coming up next. Here are a few tidbits of advice that I believe may help:

1. Read as much as you can about the process. Many of the documents that are used to monitor, organize and control the project are on the Department's Project web site. Also, read the conversion documents and look for news in the Ad Val Advisor. These are both great sources for up-to-date information. In addition, keep an eye out for e-mails and other correspondence regarding the project.
2. Ask questions about anything and everything! Both CCI and the Division have project managers and a great team of support people to help you throughout the

process. Take advantage of the one-on-one time with the CCI and Division staff. As you begin your conversion, take advantage of the weekly project meetings and send as many people as possible to all of the training that is being made available.

3. Last and most importantly, stay involved and keep the communication lines open. The CCI CAMA system is built to allow a lot of independence. However, with this independence comes a whole new set of responsibilities. Know what is happening to your data. Strive to understand how the new system will affect your current work practices. Don't wait to evaluate the long-term impact of the new CAMA system on your existing county systems. Overall, balance your expectations with what will ultimately be delivered to your county and stay involved!

Please join me in thanking Dave Rauzi, Kathy Ball and all of their staff for volunteering to go first. I would encourage everyone to speak with these counties and learn first hand about the pains and the promises. Only with participation and constructive feedback can we continue to improve the process.

David Chapman
CAMA/GIS Manager
Property Tax Division

≈

Quote of the Month

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives."

William A. Foster

≈

In-Production Training

The In-Production Training Session for the pilot counties was held April 4th – 8th. Below is a summary of the four and a half day session

On Sunday, April 3rd, DOR traveled to Evanston to attend and monitor the "Go-Live" week for the pilot counties. The counties received three days of hands-on classroom training on a replica of their go-live data. The final one and a half days were spent actually working in the office with CCI personnel assisting the staff. The CCI team of trainers included Cristi Sampson and Susan Dussaman. Kevin O'Connell, CCI's Project Manager, was on hand as well. Kathi Gregarek and Ko Clifton from CCI performed all the hardware installations on both sites.

It was very satisfying to see the pilot counties actually going into production with the new system. All the hard work the Standards Committees had done was finally paying off as Uinta and Sweetwater went live on RealWare. Attendance was excellent as Sweetwater had eight staff members attend the training and Uinta had all six staff members present.

The training consisted of the following: Monday began with an intensive session of APEX training, and the day concluded with Cristi and Susan conducting a review of the System Intro Training the pilot counties had received in February at the Little America Hotel in Little America.



A lot to consume in the 3 day Classroom Instruction ...

On Tuesday, Cristi and Susan covered Batch Processing, LEAs, Subdivisions, Appeals, Building Permits and Market Models. Wednesday's class covered Sales Comps, Reports, Auto Comps, Personal Property, Oil & Gas, Gateway and FieldWare.

CCI's training style seems to be effective and productive with a relaxed atmosphere. All participants received hands-on training on their own workstation while following along with the CCI training team. Participants were also allowed plenty of time to experience the trials and errors of experimenting with what was just taught.

During the final two days, Susan was in Sweetwater County helping county staff perform their



We're Live! Cristi from CCI (middle) instructing Glenda and Laura in the Uinta County Assessor's Office.

respective daily duties on the production data, while Cristi stayed in Uinta County to perform the same support there. DOR had personnel on hand in both locations to assist CCI and answer any questions related to the project and conversion.

Jeffery Moore
Principal Appraiser
Property Tax Division

≈

Upcoming Ad Valorem Sponsored Education

06/13/05 – 06/14/05
IAAO Workshop 151,
Uniform Standards of
Professional Appraisal Practice,
Lander, WY

07/14/05
IAAO Forum 917,
How to Critique an Appraisal,
Laramie, WY

08/22/05 – 08/26/05
IAAO Course 600,
Principles & Techniques of
Cadastral Mapping,
Thermopolis, WY

10/03/05 – 10/04/05
IAAO Workshop 163,
Marshall & Swift Cost Approach –
Commercial,
Evanston, WY

For information on classes, please
contact
Jack Rehm at (307) 777-5313, or
email: jrehm@State.wy.us

≈